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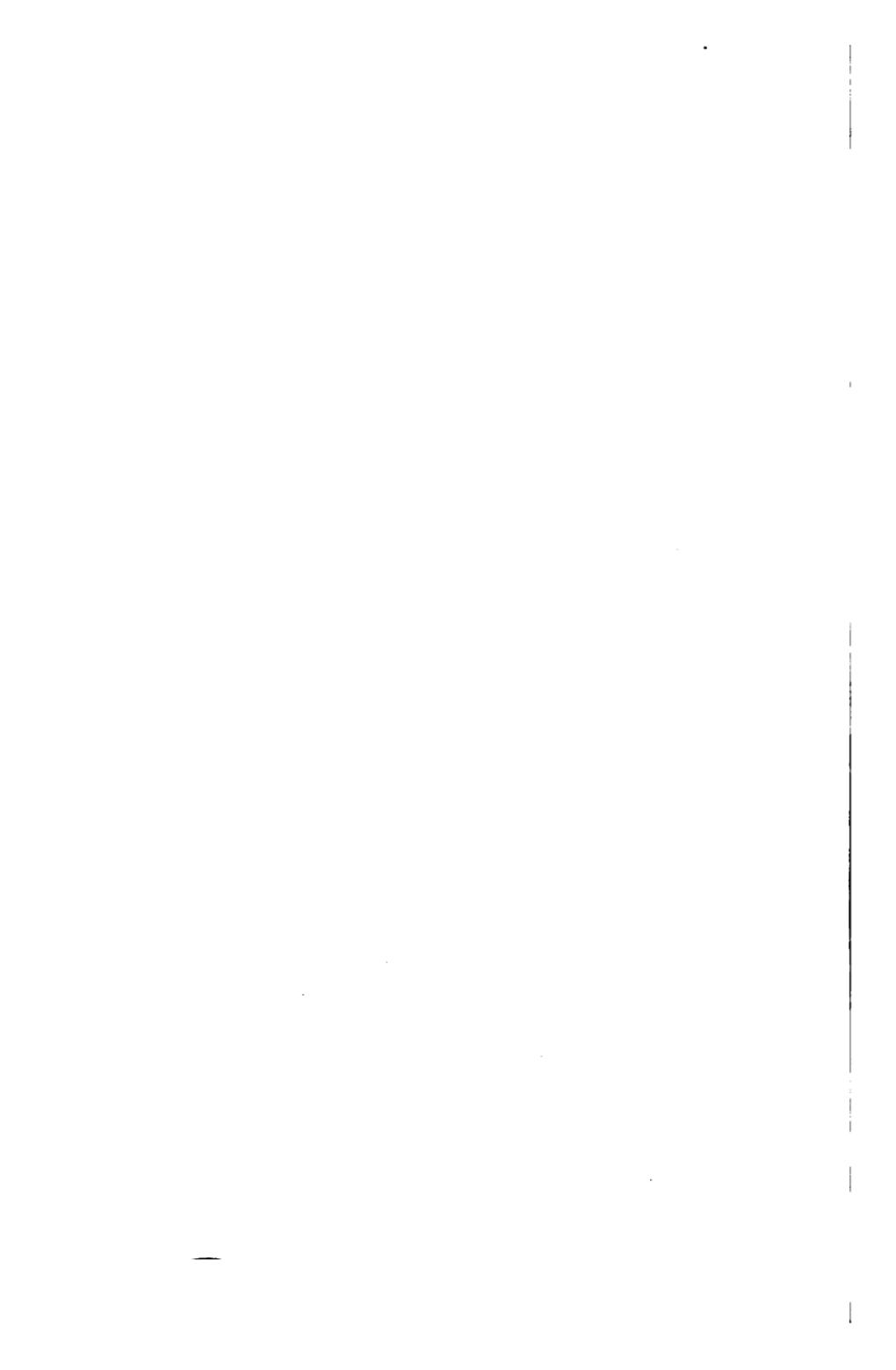
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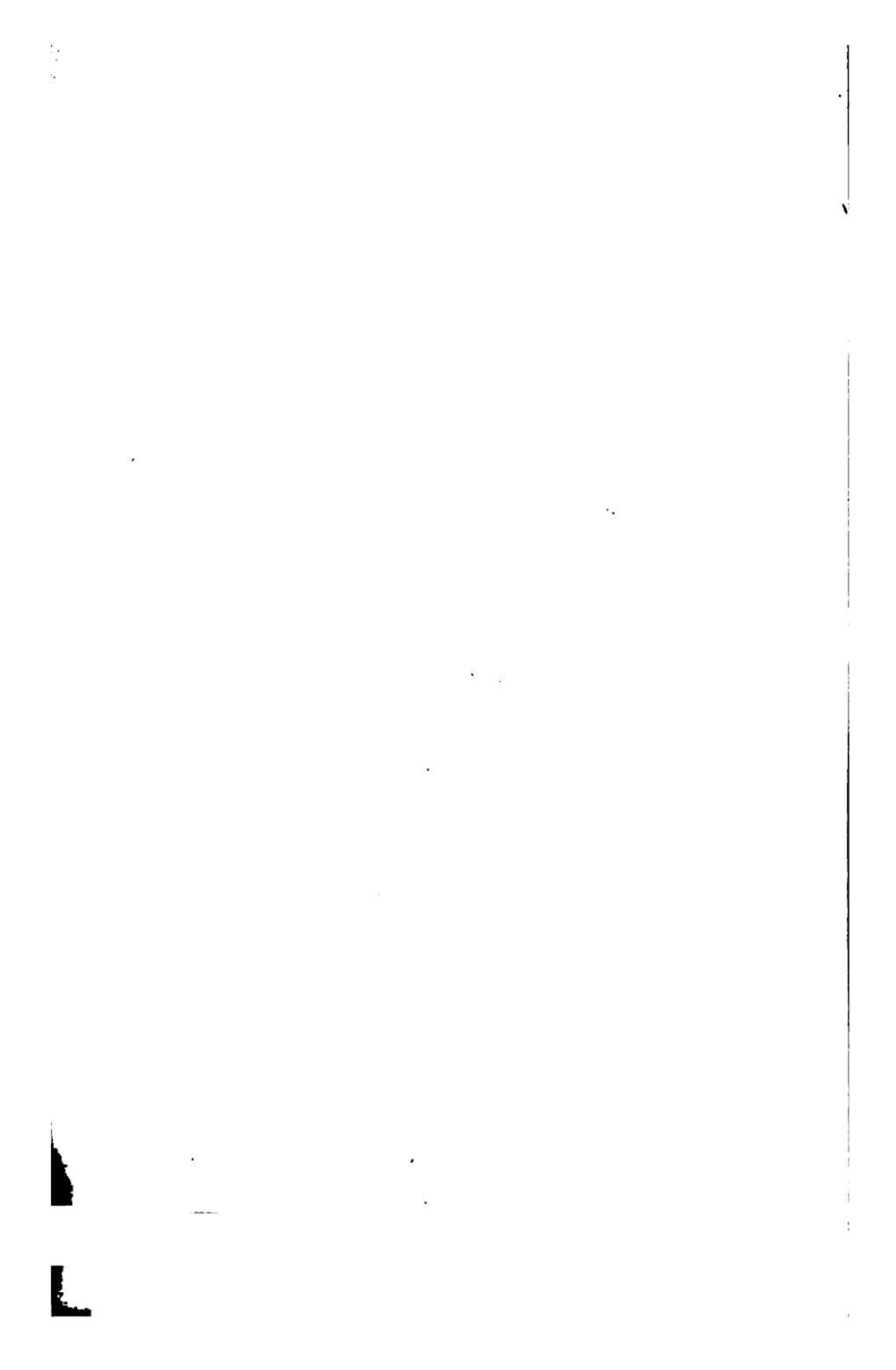
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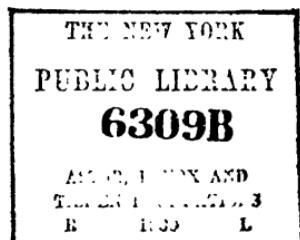
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## PART THE FIRST.

WQR 19 FEB '36



THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring  
pines and the hemlocks,  
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indis-  
tinct in the twilight,  
Stand like Druids of old, with voices sad and  
prophetic,  
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on  
their bosoms.  
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced  
neighbouring ocean

Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the  
wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval ; but where are the  
hearts that beneath it  
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in the wood-  
land the voice of the huntsman ?  
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of  
Acadian farmers, —  
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water  
the woodlands,  
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an  
image of heaven ?  
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers  
forever departed !  
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty  
blasts of October  
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle  
them far o'er the ocean.

Naught but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes, and endures, and is patient,  
Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,  
List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest ;  
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the happy.



## I.

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin  
of Minas,  
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-  
Pré  
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows  
stretched to the eastward,  
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks  
without number.  
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised  
with labor incessant,  
Shut out the turbulent tides ; but at stated  
seasons the flood-gates

Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will  
o'er the meadows.

West and south there were fields of flax, and  
orchards and cornfields

Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain ; and  
away to the northward

Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on  
the mountains

Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the  
mighty Atlantic

Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their  
station descended.

There, in the midst of its farms, reposed the  
Acadian village.

Strongly built were the houses, with frames of  
oak and of chestnut,

Such as the peasants of Normandy built in the  
reign of the Henries.

Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-windows ;  
and gables projecting



Over the basement below protected and shaded  
the door-way.

There in the tranquil evenings of summer, when  
brightly the sunset

Lighted the village street, and gilded the vanes  
on the chimneys,

Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white caps and  
in kirtles

Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs spin-  
ning the golden

Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy shuttles  
within doors

Mingled their sound with the whir of the wheels  
and the songs of the maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish priest,  
and the children

Paused in their play to kiss the hand he extended  
to bless them.

Reverend walked he among them ; and up rose  
matrons and maidens,

Hailing his slow approach with words of affectionate welcome.

Then came the laborers home from the field, and serenely the sun sank

Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry

Softly the Angelus sounded, and over the roofs of the village

Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds of intense ascending,

Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment.

Thus dwelt together in love these simple Acadian farmers,—

Dwelt in the love of God and of man. Alike were they free from

Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and envy, the vice of republics.

Neither locks had they to their doors, nor bars to their windows ;

But their dwellings were open as day and the  
hearts of the owners ;  
There the richest was poor, and the poorest lived  
in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and nearer  
the Basin of Minas,  
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of  
Grand-Pré,  
Dwelt on his goodly acres ; and with him, directing  
his household,  
Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and the pride  
of the village.  
Stalworth and stately in form was the man of sev-  
enty winters ;  
Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is covered  
with snow-flakes ;  
White as the snow were his locks, and his cheeks  
as brown as the oak-leaves.

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen  
summers.

Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on  
the thorn by the way-side,

Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the  
brown shade of her tresses !

Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that  
feed in the meadows.

When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers  
at noontide

Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah ! fair in sooth  
was the maiden.

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the  
bell from its turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest  
with his hyssop

Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings  
upon them,

Down the long street she passed, with her chap-  
let of beads and her missal,

Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue,  
and the ear-rings,  
Brought in the olden time from France, and  
since, as an heirloom,  
Handed down from mother to child, through long  
generations.  
But a celestial brightness — a more ethereal  
beauty —  
Shone on her face and encircled her form, when,  
after confession,  
Homeward serenely she walked with God's bene-  
diction upon her.  
When she had passed, it seemed like the ceasing  
of exquisite music.  
Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the house of  
the farmer  
Stood on the side of a hill commanding the sea ;  
and a shady  
Sycamore grew by the door, with a woodbine  
wreathing around it.

Rudely carved was the porch, with seats beneath ; and a footpath

Led through an orchard wide, and disappeared in the meadow.

Under the sycamore-tree were hives overhung by a penthouse,

Such as the traveller sees in regions remote by the road-side,

Built o'er a box for the poor, or the blessed image of Mary.

Farther down, on the slope of the hill, was the well with its moss-grown

Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it a trough for the horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the north, were the barns and the farm-yard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains and the antique ploughs and the harrows ;

There were the folds for the sheep ; and there, in his feathered seraglio,

Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed the cock,  
with the selfsame

Voice that in ages of old had startled the peni-  
tent Peter.

Bursting with hay were the barns, themselves a  
village. In each one

Far o'er the gable projected a roof of thatch ;  
and a staircase,

Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the odorous  
corn-loft.

There too the dove-cot stood, with its meek and  
innocent inmates

Murmuring ever of love ; while above in the  
variant breezes

Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled and sang  
of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the world, the  
farmer of Grand-Pré

Lived on his sunny farm, and Evangeline governed his household.

Many a youth, as he knelt in the church and opened his missal,

Fixed his eyes upon her, as the saint of his deepest devotion ;

Happy was he who might touch her hand or the hem of her garment !

Many a suitor came to her door, by the darkness befriended,

And as he knocked and waited to hear the sound of her footsteps,

Knew not which beat the louder, his heart or the knocker of iron ;

Or at the joyous feast of the Patron Saint of the village,

Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the dance as he whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a part of the music.

But, among all who came, young Gabriel only  
was welcome ;  
Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the black-  
smith,  
Who was a mighty man in the village, and hon-  
ored of all men ;  
For since the birth of time, throughout all ages  
and nations,  
Has the craft of the smith been held in repute by  
the people.  
Basil was Benedict's friend. Their children  
from earliest childhood  
Grew up together as brother and sister ; and  
Father Felician,  
Priest and pedagogue both in the village, had  
taught them their letters  
Out of the selfsame book, with the hymns of the  
church and the plain-song.  
But when the hymn was sung, and the daily  
lesson completed,

Swiftly they hurried away to the forge of Basil  
the blacksmith.

There at the door they stood, with wondering  
eyes to behold him

Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the horse as  
a plaything,

Nailing the shoe in its place ; while near him the  
tire of the cart-wheel

Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a circle  
of cinders.

Oft on autumnal eves, when without in the gath-  
ering darkness

Bursting with light seemed the smithy, through  
every cranny and crevice,

Warm by the forge within they watched the la-  
boring bellows,

And as its panting ceased, and the sparks ex-  
pired in the ashes,

Merrily laughed, and said they were nuns going  
into the chapel.

Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the swoop  
of the eagle,  
Down the hill-side bounding, they glided away  
o'er the meadow.

Oft in the barns they climbed to the populous  
nests on the rafters,  
Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous stone,  
which the swallow  
Brings from the shore of the sea to restore the  
sight of its fledglings ;

Lucky was he who found that stone in the nest  
of the swallow !

Thus passed a few swift years, and they no  
longer were children.

He was a valiant youth, and his face, like the  
face of the morning,  
Gladdened the earth with its light, and ripened  
thought into action.

She was a woman now, with the heart and hopes  
of a woman.

“ Sunshine of Saint Eulalie ” was she called ;  
for that was the sunshine  
Which, as the farmers believed, would load their  
orchards with apples ;  
She, too, would bring to her husband’s house  
delight and abundance,  
Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces of chil-  
dren.

## II.

Now had the season returned, when the nights  
grow colder and longer,  
And the retreating sun the sign of the Scorpion  
enters.  
Birds of passage sailed through the leaden air,  
from the ice-bound,  
Desolate northern bays to the shores of tropical  
islands.  
Harvests were gathered in; and wild with the  
winds of September  
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob of old  
with the angel.

All the signs foretold a winter long and inclement.

Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had hoarded their honey

Till the hives overflowed ; and the Indian hunters asserted

Cold would the winter be, for thick was the fur of the foxes.

Such was the advent of autumn. Then followed that beautiful season,

Called by the pious Acadian peasants the Summer of All-Saints !

Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light ; and the landscape

Lay as if new-created in all the freshness of childhood.

Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and the restless heart of the ocean

Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in harmony blended.

Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks  
in the farm-yards,  
Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing  
of pigeons,  
All were subdued and low as the murmurs of  
love, and the great sun  
Looked with the eye of love through the golden  
vapors around him ;  
While arrayed in its robes of russet and scarlet  
and yellow,  
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each glittering  
tree of the forest  
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian adorned  
with mantles and jewels.

Now recommenced the reign of rest and affec-  
tion and stillness.

Day with its burden and heat had departed, and  
twilight descending

Brought back the evening star to the sky, and  
the herds to the homestead.  
Pawing the ground they came, and resting their  
necks on each other,  
And with their nostrils distended inhaling the  
freshness of evening.  
Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's beautiful  
heifer,  
Proud of her snow-white hide, and the ribbon  
that waved from her collar,  
Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious of human  
affection.  
Then came the shepherd back with his bleating  
flocks from the sea-side,  
Where was their favorite pasture. Behind them  
followed the watch-dog,  
Patient, full of importance, and grand in the  
pride of his instinct,  
Walking from side to side with a lordly air, and  
superbly

Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward the  
stragglers ;

Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept ;  
their protector,

When from the forest at night, through the starry  
silence, the wolves howled.

Late, with the rising moon, returned the wains  
from the marshes,

Laden with briny hay, that filled the air with its  
odor.

Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on their  
manes and their fetlocks,

While aloft on their shoulders the wooden and  
ponderous saddles,

Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned with  
tassels of crimson,

Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks heavy  
with blossoms.

Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and yielded  
their udders

Unto the milkmaid's hand ; whilst loud and in  
regular cadence  
Into the sounding pail the foaming streamlets  
descended.  
Lowing of cattle and peals of laughter were  
heard in the farm-yard,  
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they sank into  
stillness ;  
Heavily closed, with a creaking sound, the valves  
of the barn-doors,  
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a season  
was silent.

In-doors, warm by the wide-mouthed fireplace,  
idly the farmer  
Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how the  
flames and the smoke-wreaths  
Struggled together like foes in a burning city.  
Behind him,

Nodding and mocking along the wall, with gestures fantastic,

Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.

Faces, clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair

Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates on the dresser

Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.

Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,

Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him

Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.

Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated,

Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her.

Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its  
diligent shuttle,

While the monotonous drone of the wheel, like  
the drone of a bagpipe,

Followed the old man's song, and united the  
fragments together.

As in a church, when the chant of the choir at  
intervals ceases,

Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words of the  
priest at the altar,

So, in each pause of the song, with measured  
motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were footsteps heard,  
and, suddenly lifted,

Sounded the wooden latch, and the door swung  
back on its hinges.

Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it was  
Basil the blacksmith,

And by her beating heart Evangeline knew who  
was with him.

“ Welcome ! ” the farmer exclaimed, as their  
footsteps paused on the threshold,

“ Welcome, Basil, my friend ! Come, take thy  
place on the settle

Close by the chimney-side, which is always  
empty without thee ;

Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe and the  
box of tobacco ;

Never so much thyself art thou as when through  
the curling

Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy friendly and  
jovial face gleams

Round and red as the harvest moon through the  
mist of the marshes.”

Then, with a smile of content, thus answered  
Basil the blacksmith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed seat by the  
fireside : —

“ Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever thy jest  
and thy ballad !

Ever in cheerfulness mood art thou, when others  
are filled with

Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only ruin  
before them.

Happy art thou, as if every day thou hadst  
picked up a horseshoe.”

Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that Evan-  
geline brought him,

And with a coal from the embers had lighted, he  
slowly continued :—

“ Four days now are passed since the English  
ships at their anchors

Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth, with their can-  
non pointed against us.

What their design may be is unknown ; but all  
are commanded

On the morrow to meet in the church, where his  
Majesty’s mandate

Will be proclaimed as law in the land. Alas !  
in the mean time  
Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts of the  
people.”

Then made answer the farmer : — “ Perhaps  
some friendlier purpose  
Brings these ships to our shores. Perhaps the  
harvests in England  
By the untimely rains or untimelier heat have  
been blighted,  
And from our bursting barns they would feed  
their cattle and children.”

“ Not so thinketh the folk in the village,” said,  
warmly, the blacksmith,  
Shaking his head, as in doubt ; then, heaving a  
sigh, he continued : —

“ Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau Séjour,  
nor Port Royal.  
Many already have fled to the forest, and lurk on  
its outskirts,

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious fate of  
to-morrow.

Arms have been taken from us, and warlike  
weapons of all kinds ;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith's sledge and the  
scythe of the mower.”

Then with a pleasant smile made answer the  
jovial farmer :—

“ Safer are we unarmed, in the midst of our  
flocks and our cornfields,

Safer within these peaceful dikes, besieged by  
the ocean,

Than were our fathers in forts, besieged by the  
enemy’s cannon.

Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night may no  
shadow of sorrow

Fall on this house and hearth ; for this is the  
night of the contract.

Built are the house and the barn. The merry  
lads of the village

Strongly have built them and well ; and, breaking  
the glebe round about them,

Filled the barn with hay, and the house with food  
for a twelvemonth.

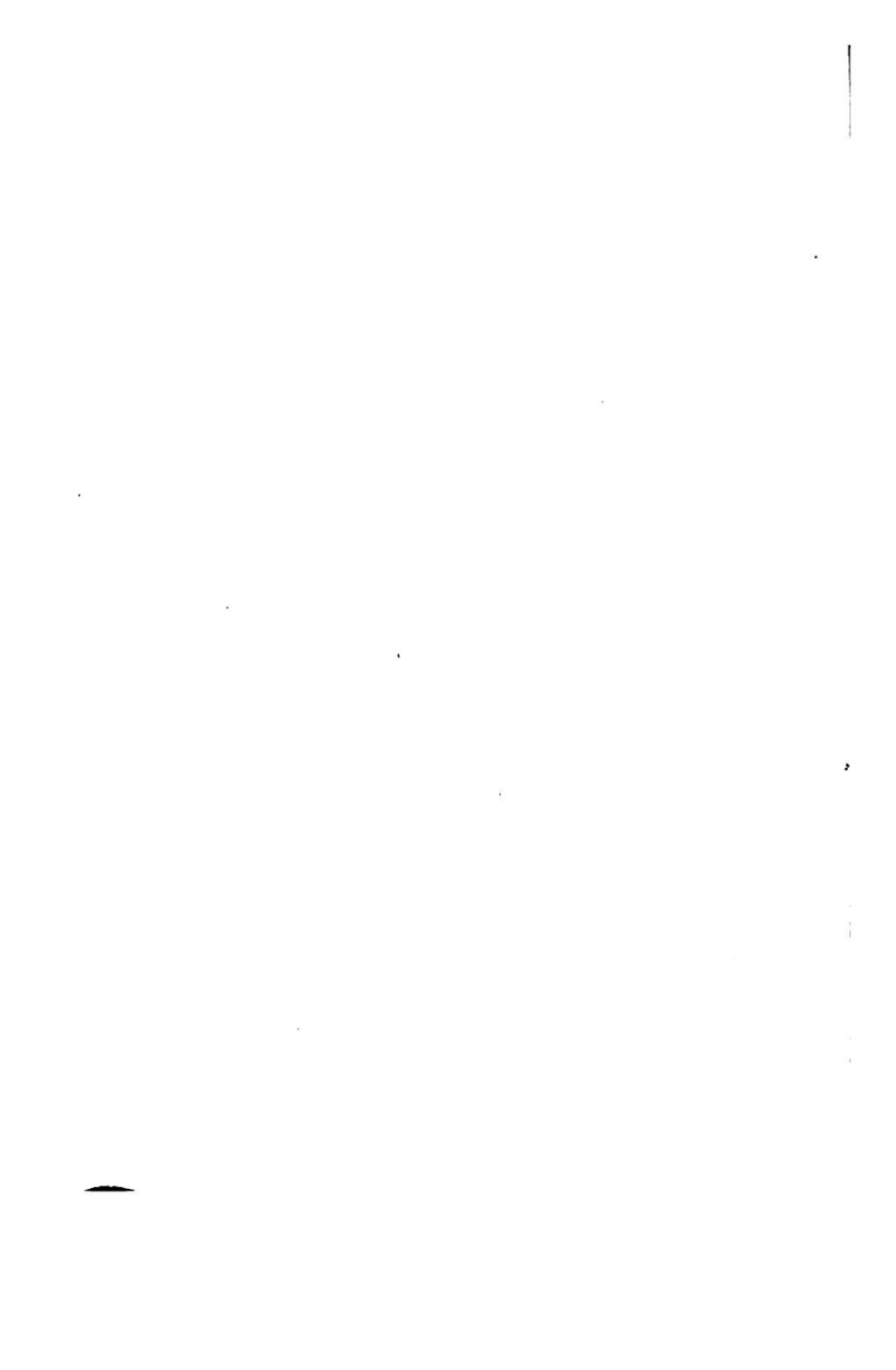
René Leblanc will be here anon, with his papers  
and inkhorn.

Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice in the joy  
of our children ? ”

As apart by the window she stood, with her hand  
in her lover’s,

Blushing Evangeline heard the words that her  
father had spoken,

And as they died on his lips the worthy notary  
entered.



## III.

BENT like a laboring oar, that toils in the surf  
of the ocean,

Bent, but not broken, by age was the form of  
the notary public ;

Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken floss of the  
maize, hung

Over his shoulders ; his forehead was high ; and  
glasses with horn bows

Sat astride on his nose, with a look of wisdom  
supernal.

Father of twenty children was he, and more than  
a hundred

Children's children rode on his knee, and heard  
his great watch tick.

Four long years in the times of the war had he  
languished a captive,

Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend  
of the English.

Now, though warier grown, without all guile or  
suspicion,

Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and simple,  
and childlike.

He was beloved by all, and most of all by the  
children ;

For he told them tales of the Loup-garou in the  
forest,

And of the goblin that came in the night to water  
the horses,

And of the white Létiche, the ghost of a child  
who unchristened

Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the  
chambers of children ;

And how on Christmas eve the oxen talked in  
the stable,  
And how the fever was cured by a spider shut  
up in a nutshell,  
And of the marvellous powers of four-leaved  
clover and horseshoes,  
With whatsoever else was writ in the lore of the  
village.  
Then up rose from his seat by the fireside Basil  
the blacksmith,  
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and slowly  
extending his right hand,  
“ Father Leblanc,” he exclaimed, “ thou hast  
heard the talk in the village,  
And, perchance, canst tell us some news of these  
ships and their errand.”  
Then with modest demeanour made answer the  
notary public, —  
“ Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth, yet am  
never the wiser ;

And what their errand may be I know not better  
than others.

Yet am I not of those who imagine some evil  
intention

Brings them here, for we are at peace ; and why  
then molest us ? ”

“ God’s name ! ” shouted the hasty and some-  
what irascible blacksmith ;

“ Must we in all things look for the how, and  
the why, and the wherefore ? ”

Daily injustice is done, and might is the right of  
the strongest ! ”

But, without heeding his warmth, continued the  
notary public, —

“ Man is unjust, but God is just ; and finally  
justice

Triumphs ; and well I remember a story, that  
often consoled me,

When as a captive I lay in the old French fort  
at Port Royal.”

This was the old man's favorite tale, and he  
loved to repeat it

Whenever neighbours complained that any injus-  
tice was done them.

“ Once in an ancient city, whose name I no  
longer remember,

Raised aloft on a column, a brazen statue of Jus-  
tice

Stood in the public square, upholding the scales  
in its left hand,

And in its right a sword, as an emblem that jus-  
tice presided

Over the laws of the land, and the hearts and  
homes of the people.

Even the birds had built their nests in the scales  
of the balance,

Having no fear of the sword that flashed in the  
sunshine above them.

But in the course of time the laws of the land  
were corrupted ;

Might took the place of right, and the weak were  
oppressed, and the mighty  
Ruled with an iron rod. Then it chanced in  
a nobleman's palace  
That a necklace of pearls was lost, and ere long  
a suspicion  
Fell on an orphan girl who lived as maid in the  
household.  
She, after form of trial condemned to die on the  
scaffold,  
Patiently met her doom at the foot of the statue  
of Justice.  
As to her Father in heaven her innocent spirit  
ascended,  
Lo ! o'er the city a tempest rose ; and the bolts  
of the thunder  
Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled in wrath  
from its left hand  
Down on the pavement below the clattering  
scales of the balance,

And in the hollow thereof was found the nest of  
a magpie,

Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls  
was inwoven."

Silenced, but not convinced, when the story was  
ended, the blacksmith

Stood like a man who fain would speak, but  
findeth no language ;

And all his thoughts congealed into lines on his  
face, as the vapors

Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes  
in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on  
the table,

Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with  
home-brewed

Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its strength in  
the village of Grand-Pré ;

While from his pocket the notary drew his  
papers and ink-horn,  
Wrote with a steady hand the date and the age  
of the parties,  
Naming the dower of the bride in flocks of sheep  
and in cattle.  
Orderly all things proceeded, and duly and well  
were completed,  
And the great seal of the law was set like a sun  
on the margin.  
Then from his leathern pouch the farmer threw  
on the table  
Three times the old man's fee in solid pieces of  
silver ;  
And the notary rising, and blessing the bride and  
the bridegroom,  
Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and drank to their  
welfare.  
Wiping the foam from his lip, he solemnly  
bowed and departed,

While in silence the others sat and mused by the  
fireside,

Till Evangeline brought the draught-board out  
of its corner.

Soon was the game begun. In friendly conten-  
tion the old men

Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccessful ma-  
nœuvre,

Laughed when a man was crowned, or a breach  
was made in the king-row.

Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom of a win-  
dow's embrasure,

Sat the lovers, and whispered together, behold-  
ing the moon rise

Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist of the  
meadows.

Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of  
heaven,

Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots  
of the angels.

Thus passed the evening away. Anon the  
bell from the belfry  
Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew,  
and straightway  
Rose the guests and departed ; and silence  
reigned in the household.  
Many a farewell word and sweet good-night on  
the door-step  
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart, and filled it  
with gladness.  
Carefully then were covered the embers that  
glowed on the hearth-stone,  
And on the oaken stairs resounded the tread of  
the farmer.  
Soon with a soundless step the foot of Evange-  
line followed.  
Up the staircase moved a luminous space in the  
darkness,  
Lighted less by the lamp than the shining face of  
the maiden.

Silent she passed through the hall, and entered  
the door of her chamber.

Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of  
white, and its clothes-press

Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were  
carefully folded

Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evan-  
geline woven.

This was the precious dower she would bring to  
her husband in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her  
skill as a housewife.

Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the mel-  
low and radiant moonlight

Streamed through the windows, and lighted the  
room, till the heart of the maiden

Swelled and obeyed its power, like the tremulous  
tides of the ocean.

Ah ! she was fair, exceeding fair to behold, as  
she stood with

Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming floor of  
her chamber !

Little she dreamed that below, among the trees  
of the orchard,

Waited her lover and watched for the gleam of  
her lamp and her shadow.

Yet were her thoughts of him, and at times a  
feeling of sadness

Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade of  
clouds in the moonlight

Flitted across the floor and darkened the room  
for a moment.

And as she gazed from the window she saw se-  
renely the moon pass

Forth from the folds of a cloud, and one star  
follow her footsteps,

As out of Abraham's tent young Ishmael wan-  
dered with Hagar !

## IV.

PLEASANTLY rose next morn the sun on the  
village of Grand-Pré.

Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the  
Basin of Minas,

Where the ships, with their wavering shadows,  
were riding at anchor.

Life had long been astir in the village, and clam-  
orous labor

Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden  
gates of the morning.

Now from the country around, from the farms  
and the neighbouring hamlets,

Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian  
peasants.

Many a glad good-morrow and jocund laugh from  
the young folk

Made the bright air brighter, as up from the  
numerous meadows,

Where no path could be seen but the track of  
wheels in the greensward,

Group after group appeared, and joined, or  
passed on the highway.

Long ere noon, in the village all sounds of labor  
were silenced.

Thronged were the streets with people ; and  
noisy groups at the house-doors

Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and gos-  
sipped together.

Every house was an inn, where all were wel-  
comed and feasted ;

For with this simple people, who lived like broth-  
ers together,

All things were held in common, and what one  
had was another's.

Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality seemed  
more abundant :

For Evangeline stood among the guests of her  
father ;

Bright was her face with smiles, and words of  
welcome and gladness

Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed the cup  
as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous air of the  
orchard,

Bending with golden fruit, was spread the feast  
of betrothal.

There in the shade of the porch were the priest  
and the notary seated ;

There good Benedict sat, and sturdy Basil the  
blacksmith.

Not far withdrawn from these, by the cider-press  
and the beehives,

Michael the fiddler was placed, with the gayest  
of hearts and of waistcoats.

Shadow and light from the leaves alternately  
played on his snow-white

Hair, as it waved in the wind ; and the jolly face  
of the fiddler

Glowed like a living coal when the ashes are  
blown from the embers.

Gayly the old man sang to the vibrant sound of  
his fiddle,

*Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and Le Carillon  
de Dunkerque,*

And anon with his wooden shoes beat time to the  
music.

Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of the dizzy-  
ing dances

Under the orchard-trees and down the path to the  
meadows ;

---

Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.

Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline, Benedict's daughter !

Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel, son of the blacksmith !

So passed the morning away. And lo ! with a summons sonorous

Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows a drum beat.

Thronged ere long was the church with men.

Without, in the churchyard,

Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and hung on the head-stones

Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from the forest.

Then came the guard from the ships, and marching proudly among them

Entered the sacred portal. With loud and dis-  
sonant clangor

Echoed the sound of their brazen drums from  
ceiling and casement,—

Echoed a moment only, and slowly the ponder-  
ous portal

Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited the will  
of the soldiers.

Then uprose their commander, and spake from  
the steps of the altar,

Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals, the  
royal commission.

“ You are convened this day,” he said, “ by his  
Majesty’s orders.

Clement and kind has he been ; but how you  
have answered his kindness,

Let your own hearts reply ! To my natural  
make and my temper

Painful the task is I do, which to you I know  
must be grievous.

---

Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver the will  
of our monarch ;  
Namely, that all your lands, and dwellings, and  
cattle of all kinds  
Forfeited be to the crown ; and that you your-  
selves from this province  
Be transported to other lands. God grant you  
may dwell there  
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and peaceable  
people !  
Prisoners now I declare you ; for such is his  
Majesty's pleasure ! ”  
As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice  
of summer,  
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of  
the hailstones  
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field and  
shatters his windows,  
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with  
thatch from the house-roofs,

Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their inclosures ;

So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the speaker.

Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and then rose

Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger,

And, by one impulse moved, they madly rushed to the door-way.

Vain was the hope of escape ; and cries and fierce imprecations

Rang through the house of prayer ; and high o'er the heads of the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure of Basil the blacksmith,

As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with passion ; and wildly he shouted, —

“ Down with the tyrants of England ! we never  
have sworn them allegiance !

Death to these foreign soldiers, who seize on our  
homes and our harvests ! ”

More he fain would have said, but the merciless  
hand of a soldier

Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged him  
down to the pavement.

In the midst of the strife and tumult of angry  
contention,

Lo ! the door of the chancel opened, and Father  
Felician

Entered, with serious mien, and ascended the  
steps of the altar.

Raising his reverend hand, with a gesture he awed  
into silence

All that clamorous throng ; and thus he spake to  
his people ;

Deep were his tones and solemn ; in accents  
measured and mournful

Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarum, distinctly  
the clock strikes.

“ What is this that ye do, my children ? what  
madness has seized you ?

Forty years of my life have I labored among you,  
and taught you,

Not in word alone, but in deed, to love one  
another !

Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils and  
prayers and privations ?

Have you so soon forgotten all lessons of love  
and forgiveness ?

This is the house of the Prince of Peace, and  
would you profane it

Thus with violent deeds and hearts overflowing  
with hatred ?

Lo ! where the crucified Christ from his cross is  
gazing upon you !

See ! in those sorrowful eyes what meekness and  
holy compassion !

Hark ! how those lips still repeat the prayer,  
‘ O Father, forgive them ! ’

Let us repeat that prayer in the hour when the  
wicked assail us,

Let us repeat it now, and say, ‘ O Father, forgive  
them ! ’ ”

Few were his words of rebuke, but deep in the  
hearts of his people

Sank they, and sobs of contrition succeeded that  
passionate outbreak ;

And they repeated his prayer, and said, “ O Fa-  
ther, forgive them ! ”

Then came the evening service. The tapers  
gleamed from the altar.

Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest,  
and the people responded,

Not with their lips alone, but their hearts ; and  
the Ave Maria  
Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their  
souls, with devotion translated,  
Rose on the ardor of prayer, like Elijah ascend-  
ing to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings  
of ill, and on all sides  
Wandered, wailing, from house to house the  
women and children.  
Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with  
her right hand  
Shielding her eyes from the level rays of the  
sun, that, descending,  
Lighted the village street with mysterious splen-  
dor, and roofed each  
Peasant's cottage with golden thatch, and em-  
blazoned its windows.

Long within had been spread the snow-white  
cloth on the table ;

There stood the wheaten loaf, and the honey  
fragrant with wild flowers ;

There stood the tankard of ale, and the cheese  
fresh brought from the dairy ;

And at the head of the board the great arm-chair  
of the farmer.

Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's door,  
as the sunset

Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the broad  
ambrosial meadows.

Ah ! on her spirit within a deeper shadow had  
fallen,

And from the fields of her soul a fragrance ce-  
lestial ascended, —

Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and forgive-  
ness, and patience !

Then, all Forgetful of self, she wandered into the  
village,

Cheering with looks and words the disconsolate  
hearts of the women,  
As o'er the darkening fields with lingering steps  
they departed,  
Urged by their household cares, and the weary  
feet of their children.  
Down sank the great red sun, and in golden,  
glimmering vapors  
Veiled the light of his face, like the Prophet  
descending from Sinai.  
Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus  
sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the church  
Evangeline lingered.  
All was silent within ; and in vain at the door  
and the windows  
Stood she, and listened and looked, until, over-  
come by emotion,

“Gabriel !” cried she aloud with tremulous voice ; but no answer  
Came from the graves of the dead, nor the gloomier grave of the living.  
Slowly at length she returned to the tenantless house of her father.  
Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on the board stood the supper untasted,  
Empty and drear was each room, and haunted with phantoms of terror.  
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and the floor of her chamber.  
In the dead of the night she heard the whispering rain fall  
Loud on the withered leaves of the sycamore-tree by the window.  
Keenly the lightning flashed ; and the voice of the neighbouring thunder  
Told her that God was in heaven, and governed the world he created !

Then she remembered the tale she had heard of  
the justice of heaven ;  
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she peace-  
fully slumbered till morning.

## V.

FOUR times the sun had risen and set ; and now  
on the fifth day  
Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids  
of the farm-house.  
Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mourn-  
ful procession,  
Came from the neighbouring hamlets and farms  
the Acadian women,  
Driving in ponderous wains their household goods  
to the sea-shore,  
Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on  
their dwellings,

Ere they were shut from sight by the winding  
road and the woodland.

Close at their sides their children ran, and urged  
on the oxen,

While in their little hands they clasped some  
fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they hurried ;  
and there on the sea-beach

Piled in confusion lay the household goods of the  
peasants.

All day long between the shore and the ships did  
the boats ply ;

All day long the wains came laboring down from  
the village.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was near to  
his setting,

Echoing far o'er the fields came the roll of drums  
from the church-yard.

Thither the women and children thronged. On  
a sudden the church-doors  
Opened, and forth came the guard, and marching  
in gloomy procession  
Followed the long-imprisoned, but patient, Aca-  
dian farmers.  
Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from their  
homes and their country,  
Sing as they go, and in singing forget they are  
weary and way-worn,  
So with songs on their lips the Acadian peasants  
descended  
Down from the church to the shore, amid their  
wives and their daughters.  
Foremost the young men came ; and, raising  
together their voices,  
Sang they with tremulous lips a chant of the  
Catholic Missions : —  
“ Sacred heart of the Saviour ! O inexhaustible  
fountain !

Fill our hearts this day with strength and submission and patience ! ”

Then the old men, as they marched, and the women that stood by the way-side Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds in the sunshine above them

Mingled their notes therewith, like voices of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited in silence,

Not overcome with grief, but strong in the hour of affliction, —

Calmly and sadly waited, until the procession approached her,

And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale with emotion.

Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly running to meet him,

Clasped she his hands, and laid her head on his  
shoulder, and whispered, —

“ Gabriel ! be of good cheer ! for if we love  
one another,

Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever mis-  
chances may happen ! ”

Smiling she spake these words ; then suddenly  
paused, for her father

Saw she slowly advancing. Alas ! how changed  
was his aspect !

Gone was the glow from his cheek, and the fire  
from his eye, and his footstep

Heavier seemed with the weight of the weary  
heart in his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped his neck  
and embraced him,

Speaking words of endearment where words of  
comfort availed not.

Thus to the Gaspereau’s mouth moved on that  
mournful procession.

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and  
stir of embarking.

Busily plied the freighted boats ; and in the con-  
fusion

Wives were torn from their husbands, and moth-  
ers, too late, saw their children

Left on the land, extending their arms, with  
wildest entreaties.

So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel  
carried,

While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood  
with her father.

Half the task was not done when the sun went  
down, and the twilight

Deepened and darkened around ; and in haste  
the refluent ocean

Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the  
sand-beach

Covered with waifs of the tide, with kelp and  
the slippery sea-weed.

Farther back in the midst of the household goods  
and the wagons,  
Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after a  
battle,  
All escape cut off by the sea, and the sentinels  
near them,  
Lay encamped for the night the houseless Aca-  
dian farmers.  
Back to its nethermost caves retreated the bel-  
lowing ocean,  
Dragging adown the beach the rattling peb-  
bles, and leaving  
Inland and far up the shore the stranded boats  
of the sailors.  
Then, as the night descended, the herds re-  
turned from their pastures ;  
Sweet was the moist still air with the odor of  
milk from their udders ;  
Lowing they waited, and long, at the well-known  
bars of the farm-yard, —

Waited and looked in vain for the voice and the  
hand of the milkmaid.

Silence reigned in the streets ; from the church  
no Angelus sounded,

Rose no smoke from the roofs, and gleamed no  
lights from the windows.

But on the shores meanwhile the evening fires  
had been kindled,

Built of the drift-wood thrown on the sands from  
wrecks in the tempest.

Round them shapes of gloom and sorrowful faces  
were gathered,

Voices of women were heard, and of men, and  
the crying of children.

Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth to hearth  
in his parish,

Wandered the faithful priest, consoling and bless-  
ing and cheering,

Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's desolate sea-shore.

Thus he approached the place where Evangeline sat with her father,

And in the flickering light beheld the face of the old man,

Haggard and hollow and wan, and without either thought or emotion,

E'en as the face of a clock from which the hands have been taken.

Vainly Evangeline strove with words and caresses to cheer him,

Vainly offered him food ; yet he moved not, he looked not, he spake not,

But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at the flickering fire-light.

“ *Benedicite !* ” murmured the priest, in tones of compassion.

More he fain would have said, but his heart was full, and his accents

Faltered and paused on his lips, as the feet of a  
child on a threshold,  
Hushed by the scene he beholds, and the awful  
presence of sorrow.  
Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on the head  
of the maiden,  
Raising his eyes, full of tears, to the silent stars  
that above them  
Moved on their way, unperturbed by the wrongs  
and sorrows of mortals.  
Then sat he down at her side, and they wept  
together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light, as in  
autumn the blood-red  
Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven, and  
o'er the horizon  
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands upon  
mountain and meadow,

Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge  
shadows together.

Broader and ever broader it gleamed on the roofs  
of the village,

Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and the ships  
that lay in the roadstead.

Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of  
flame were

Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like  
the quivering hands of a martyr.

Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burn-  
ing thatch, and, uplifting,

Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from  
a hundred house-tops

Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame  
intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the crowd on  
the shore and on shipboard.

Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in  
their anguish,

“ We shall behold no more our homes in the  
village of Grand-Pré ! ”

Loud on a sudden the cocks began to crow in the  
farm-yards,

Thinking the day had dawned ; and anon the  
lowing of cattle

Came on the evening breeze, by the barking of  
dogs interrupted.

Then rose a sound of dread, such as startles the  
sleeping encampments

Far in the western prairies or forests that skirt  
the Nebraska,

When the wild horses affrighted sweep by with  
the speed of the whirlwind,

Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes rush to  
the river.

Such was the sound that arose on the night, as  
the herds and the horses

Broke through their folds and fences, and madly  
rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet speechless,  
the priest and the maiden  
Gazed on the scene of terror that reddened and  
widened before them ;  
And as they turned at length to speak to their  
silent companion,  
Lo ! from his seat he had fallen, and stretched  
abroad on the sea-shore  
Motionless lay his form, from which the soul had  
departed.  
Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless head, and  
the maiden  
Knelt at her father's side, and wailed aloud in her  
terror.  
Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with her head  
on his bosom.

Through the long night she lay in deep, oblivious  
slumber ;

And when she woke from the trance, she beheld  
a multitude near her.

Faces of friends she beheld, that were mournfully  
gazing upon her,

Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of saddest  
compassion.

Still the blaze of the burning village illuminated the  
landscape,

Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed on the  
faces around her,

And like the day of doom it seemed to her wa-  
vering senses.

Then a familiar voice she heard, as it said to the  
people, —

“ Let us bury him here by the sea. When a  
happier season

Brings us again to our homes from the unknown  
land of our exile,

Then shall his sacred dust be piously laid in the church-yard."

Such were the words of the priest. And there in haste by the sea-side,

Having the glare of the burning village for funeral torches,

But without bell or book, they buried the farmer of Grand-Pré.

And as the voice of the priest repeated the service of sorrow,

Lo ! with a mournful sound, like the voice of a vast congregation,

Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled its roar with the dirges.

'T was the returning tide, that afar from the waste of the ocean,

With the first dawn of the day, came heaving and hurrying landward.

Then recommenced once more the stir and noise of embarking ;

And with the ebb of that tide the ships sailed out  
of the harbour,  
Leaving behind them the dead on the shore, and  
the village in ruins.

**PART THE SECOND.**



## I.

MANY a weary year had passed since the burning  
of Grand-Pré,  
When on the falling tide the freighted vessels  
departed,  
Bearing a nation, with all its household gods, into  
exile,  
Exile without an end, and without an example in  
story.  
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the Acadians  
landed ;  
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow, when  
the wind from the northeast

---

Strikes aslant through the fogs that darken the  
Banks of Newfoundland.

Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wandered  
from city to city,

From the cold lakes of the North to sultry  
Southern savannas, —

From the bleak shores of the sea to the lands  
where the Father of Waters

Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags them  
down to the ocean,

Deep in their sands to bury the scattered bones  
of the mammoth.

Friends they sought and homes ; and many,  
despairing, heart-broken,

Asked of the earth but a grave, and no longer  
a friend nor a fireside.

Written their history stands on tablets of stone in  
the church-yards.

Long among them was seen a maiden who waited  
and wandered,

Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently suffering all things.

Fair was she and young ; but, alas ! before her extended,

Dreary and vast and silent, the desert of life, with its pathway

Marked by the graves of those who had sorrowed and suffered before her,

Passions long extinguished, and hopes long dead and abandoned,

As the emigrant's way o'er the Western desert is marked by

Camp-fires long consumed, and bones that bleach in the sunshine.

Something there was in her life incomplete, imperfect, unfinished ;

As if a morning of June, with all its music and sunshine,

Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading, slowly descended

Into the east again, from whence it late had  
arisen.

Sometimes she lingered in towns, till, urged by  
the fever within her,

Urged by a restless longing, the hunger and thirst  
of the spirit,

She would commence again her endless search  
and endeavour ;

Sometimes in church-yards strayed, and gazed on  
the crosses and tombstones,

Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that  
perhaps in its bosom

He was already at rest, and she longed to slum-  
ber beside him.

Sometimes a rumor, a hearsay, an inarticulate  
whisper,

Came with its airy hand to point and beckon her  
forward.

Sometimes she spake with those who had seen  
her beloved and known him,

But it was long ago, in some far-off place or forgotten.

“ Gabriel Lajeunesse ! ” said they ; “ O, yes ! we have seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and both have gone to the prairies ;

*Coureurs-des-Bois* are they, and famous hunters and trappers.”

“ Gabriel Lajeunesse ! ” said others ; “ O, yes ! we have seen him.

He is a *Voyageur* in the lowlands of Louisiana.”

Then would they say, — “ Dear child ! why dream and wait for him longer ?

Are there not other youths as fair as Gabriel ? others

Who have hearts as tender and true, and spirits as loyal ?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary’s son, who has loved thee

Many a tedious year ; come, give him thy hand  
and be happy !

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St. Catherine's tresses."

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely but sadly, — " I cannot !

Whither my heart has gone, there follows my hand, and not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before, like a lamp, and illumines the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else lie hidden in darkness."

And thereupon the priest, her friend and father-confessor,

Said, with a smile, — " O daughter ! thy God thus speaketh within thee !

Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted ;

If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning

Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them  
full of refreshment ;

That which the fountain sends forth returns again  
to the fountain.

Patience ; accomplish thy labor ; accomplish thy  
work of affection !

Sorrow and silence are strong, and patient en-  
durance is godlike.

Therefore accomplish thy labor of love, till the  
heart is made godlike,

Purified, strengthened, perfected, and rendered  
more worthy of heaven ! ”

Cheered by the good man’s words, Evangeline  
labored and waited.

Still in her heart she heard the funeral dirge of  
the ocean,

But with its sound there was mingled a voice that  
whispered, “ Despair not ! ”

Thus did that poor soul wander in want and  
cheerless discomfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and thorns  
of existence.

Let me essay, O Muse ! to follow the wanderer's  
footsteps ; —

Not through each devious path, each change-  
ful year of existence ;

But as a traveller follows a streamlet's course  
through the valley :

Far from its margin at times, and seeing the  
gleam of its water

Here and there, in some open space, and at in-  
tervals only ;

Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan  
glooms that conceal it,

Though he behold it not, he can hear its con-  
tinuous murmur ;

Happy, at length, if he find the spot where it  
reaches an outlet.

## III.

It was the month of May. Far down the Beautiful River,

Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth of the Wabash,

Into the golden stream of the broad and swift Mississippi,

Floated a cumbrous boat, that was rowed by Acadian boatmen.

It was a band of exiles : a raft, as it were, from the shipwrecked

Nation, scattered along the coast, now floating together,

Bound by the bonds of a common belief and a  
common misfortune ;

Men and women and children, who, guided by  
hope or by hearsay,

Sought for their kith and their kin among the  
few-acred farmers

On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of fair  
Opelousas.

With them Evangeline went, and her guide, the  
Father Felician.

Onward o'er sunken sands, through a wilderness  
sombre with forests,

Day after day they glided adown the turbulent  
river ;

Night after night, by their blazing fires, en-  
camped on its borders.

Now through rushing chutes, among green islands,  
where plumelike

Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests, they  
swept with the current,

Then emerged into broad lagoons, where silvery  
sand-bars

Lay in the stream, and along the wimpling waves  
of their margin,

Shining with snow-white plumes, large flocks of  
pelicans waded.

Level the landscape grew, and along the shores  
of the river,

Shaded by china-trees, in the midst of luxuriant  
gardens,

Stood the houses of planters, with negro-cabins  
and dove-cots.

They were approaching the region where reigns  
perpetual summer,

Where through the Golden Coast, and groves  
of orange and citron,

Sweeps with majestic curve the river away to  
the eastward.

They, too, swerved from their course ; and, en-  
tering the Bayou of Plaquemine,

Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious  
waters,

Which, like a network of steel, extended in  
every direction.

Over their heads the towering and tenebrous  
boughs of the cypress

Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses in mid  
air

Waved like banners that hang on the walls of  
ancient cathedrals.

Deathlike the silence seemed, and unbroken, save  
by the herons

Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees returning  
at sunset,

Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon with  
demoniac laughter.

Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced and  
gleamed on the water,

Gleamed on the columns of cypress and cedar  
sustaining the arches,

Down through whose broken vaults it fell as  
through chinks in a ruin.

Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange were all  
things around them ;

And o'er their spirits there came a feeling of  
wonder and sadness, —

Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that can-  
not be compassed.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of  
the prairies,

Far in advance are closed the leaves of the  
shrinking mimosa,

So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings  
of evil,

Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of  
doom has attained it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustained by a vision,  
that faintly

Floated before her eyes, and beckoned her on  
through the moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that assumed the  
shape of a phantom.

Through those shadowy aisles had Gabriel wan-  
dered before her,  
And every stroke of the oar now brought him  
nearer and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the boat,  
rose one of the oarsmen,  
And, as a signal sound, if others like them per-  
adventure  
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight streams,  
blew a blast on his bugle.  
Wild through the dark colonnades and corridors  
leafy the blast rang,  
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving tongues  
to the forest.  
Soundless above them the banners of moss just  
stirred to the music.

Multitudinous echoes awoke and died in the  
distance,

Over the watery floor, and beneath the rever-  
berant branches ;

But not a voice replied ; no answer came from  
the darkness ;

And when the echoes had ceased, like a sense  
of pain was the silence.

Then Evangeline slept ; but the boatmen rowed  
through the midnight,

Silent at times, and then singing familiar Canadian  
boat-songs,

Such as they sang of old on their own Acadian  
rivers.

And through the night were heard the mysterious  
sounds of the desert,

Far off, indistinct, as of wave or wind in the  
forest,

Mixed with the whoop of the crane and the roar  
of the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged from  
those shades ; and before them  
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the Atcha-  
falaya.

Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the slight undu-  
lations

Made by the passing oars, and, resplendent in  
beauty, the lotus

Lifted her golden crown above the heads of the  
boatmen.

Faint was the air with the odorous breath of mag-  
nolia blossoms,

And with the heat of noon ; and numberless syl-  
van islands,

Fragrant and thickly embowered with blossoming  
hedges of roses,

Near to whose shores they glided along, invited to  
slumber.

Soon by the fairest of these their weary oars were  
suspended.

Under the boughs of Wachita willows, that grew  
by the margin,

Safely their boat was moored ; and scattered  
about on the greensward,

Tired with their midnight toil, the weary trav-  
ellers slumbered.

Over them vast and high extended the cope of a  
cedar.

Swinging from its great arms, the trumpet-flower  
and the grape-vine

Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like the ladder  
of Jacob,

On whose pendulous stairs the angels ascending,  
descending,

Were the swift humming-birds, that flitted from  
blossom to blossom.

Such was the vision Evangeline saw as she slum-  
bered beneath it.

Filled was her heart with love, and the dawn of  
an opening heaven

Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory of  
regions celestial.

Nearer and ever nearer, among the numberless  
islands,

Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away o'er  
the water,

Urged on its course by the sinewy arms of hunters  
and trappers.

Northward its prow was turned, to the land of  
the bison and beaver.

At the helm sat a youth, with countenance  
thoughtful and careworn.

Dark and neglected locks overshadowed his brow,  
and a sadness

Somewhat beyond his years on his face was  
legibly written.

Gabriel was it, who, weary with waiting, unhappy  
and restless,

Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of self and  
of sorrow.

Swiftly they glided along, close under the lee of  
the island,

But by the opposite bank, and behind a screen  
of palmettos,

So that they saw not the boat, where it lay con-  
cealed in the willows,

And undisturbed by the dash of their oars, and  
unseen, were the sleepers;

Angel of God was there none to awaken the  
slumbering maiden.

Swiftly they glided away, like the shade of a  
cloud on the prairie.

After the sound of their oars on the tholes had  
died in the distance,

As from a magic trance the sleepers awoke, and  
the maiden

Said with a sigh to the friendly priest, — “ O Fa-  
ther Felician !

Something says in my heart that near me Gabriel  
wanders.

Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague super-  
stition ?

Or has an angel passed, and revealed the truth to  
my spirit ? ”

Then, with a blush, she added, — “ Alas for my  
credulous fancy !

Unto ears like thine such words as these have no  
meaning.”

But made answer the reverend man, and he  
smiled as he answered, —

“ Daughter, thy words are not idle ; nor are they  
to me without meaning.

Feeling is deep and still ; and the word that floats  
on the surface

Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where the  
anchor is hidden.

Therefore trust to thy heart, and to what the  
world calls illusions.

Gabriel truly is near thee ; for not far away to  
the southward,  
On the banks of the Têche, are the towns of St.  
Maur and St. Martin.  
There the long-wandering bride shall be given  
again to her bridegroom,  
There the long-absent pastor regain his flock and  
his sheepfold.  
Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests  
of fruit-trees ;  
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest  
of heavens  
Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls  
of the forest.  
They who dwell there have named it the Eden  
of Louisiana.”

And with these words of cheer they arose and  
continued their journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from the western horizon  
Like a magician extended his golden wand o'er the landscape ;  
Twinkling vapors arose ; and sky and water and forest  
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and melted and mingled together.  
Hanging between two skies, a cloud with edges of silver,  
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars, on the motionless water.  
Filled was Evangeline's heart with inexpressible sweetness.  
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred fountains of feeling  
Glowed with the light of love, as the skies and waters around her.  
Then from a neighbouring thicket the mocking-bird, wildest of singers,

Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er  
the water,

Shook from his little throat such floods of de-  
lirious music,

That the whole air and the woods and the waves  
seemed silent to listen.

Plaintive at first were the tones and sad ; then  
soaring to madness

Seemed they to follow or guide the revel of  
frenzied Bacchantes.

Then single notes were heard, in sorrowful, low  
lamentation ;

Till, having gathered them all, he flung them  
abroad in derision,

As when, after a storm, a gust of wind through  
the tree-tops

Shakes down the rattling rain in a crystal shower  
on the branches.

With such a prelude as this, and hearts that  
throbbed with emotion,

Slowly they entered the Têche, where it flows  
through the green Opelousas,  
And through the amber air, above the crest of  
the woodland,  
Saw the column of smoke that arose from a neigh-  
bouring dwelling ; —  
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the distant  
lowing of cattle.

## III.

NEAR to the bank of the river, o'ershadowed by  
oaks, from whose branches  
Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic mistle-  
toe flaunted,  
Such as the Druids cut down with golden hatch-  
ets at Yule-tide,  
Stood, secluded and still, the house of the herds-  
man. A garden  
Girded it round about with a belt of luxuriant  
blossoms,  
Filling the air with fragrance. The house itself  
was of timbers

Hewn from the cypress-tree, and carefully fitted together.

Large and low was the roof ; and on slender columns supported,

Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad and spacious veranda,

Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee, extended around it.

At each end of the house, amid the flowers of the garden,

Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's perpetual symbol,

Scenes of endless wooing, and endless contentions of rivals.

Silence reigned o'er the place. The line of shadow and sunshine

Ran near the tops of the trees ; but the house itself was in shadow,

And from its chimney-top, ascending and slowly expanding

Into the evening air, a thin blue column of smoke  
rose.

In the rear of the house, from the garden gate,  
ran a pathway

Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of  
the limitless prairie,

Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly  
descending.

Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy  
canvas

Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless  
calm in the tropics,

Stood a cluster of cotton-trees, with cordage of  
grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf  
of the prairie,

Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and  
stirrups,

Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet  
of deerskin.

Broad and brown was the face that from under  
the Spanish sombrero

Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the lordly look  
of its master.

Round about him were numberless herds of kine,  
that were grazing

Quietly in the meadows, and breathing the va-  
pory freshness

That uprose from the river, and spread itself  
over the landscape.

Slowly lifting the horn that hung at his side, and  
expanding

Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew a blast, that  
resounded

Wildly and sweet and far, through the still damp  
air of the evening.

Suddenly out of the grass the long white horns  
of the cattle

Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse currents  
of ocean.

Silent a moment they gazed, then bellowing  
rushed o'er the prairie,

And the whole mass became a cloud, a shade in  
the distance.

Then, as the herdsman turned to the house,  
through the gate of the garden

Saw he the forms of the priest and the maiden  
advancing to meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang in  
amazement, and forward

Rushed with extended arms and exclamations of  
wonder ;

When they beheld his face, they recognized  
Basil the Blacksmith.

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his guests to  
the garden.

There in an arbour of roses with endless question  
and answer

Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their  
friendly embraces,

Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent  
and thoughtful.

Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not ; and now dark  
doubts and misgivings

Stole o'er the maiden's heart ; and Basil, some-  
what embarrassed,

Broke the silence and said, — “ If you came by  
the Atchafalaya,

How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel's  
boat on the bayous ? ”

Over Evangeline's face at the words of Basil a  
shade passed.

Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a  
tremulous accent, —

“ Gone ? is Gabriel gone ? ” and, concealing her  
face on his shoulder,

All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and she  
wept and lamented.

Then the good Basil said, — and his voice grew  
blithe as he said it, —

“ Be of good cheer, my child ; it is only to-day  
he departed.

Foolish boy ! he has left me alone with my herds  
and my horses.

Moody and restless grown, and tried and troubled,  
his spirit

Could no longer endure the calm of this quiet  
existence.

Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and sorrowful  
ever,

Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and his  
troubles,

He at length had become so tedious to men and  
to maidens,

Tedious even to me, that at length I bethought  
me, and sent him

Unto the town of Adayes to trade for mules with  
the Spaniards.

Thence he will follow the Indian trails to the  
Ozark Mountains,  
Hunting for furs in the forests, on rivers trapping  
the beaver.

Therefore be of good cheer ; we will follow the  
fugitive lover ;

He is not far on his way, and the Fates and the  
streams are against him.

Up and away to-morrow, and through the red  
dew of the morning

We will follow him fast, and bring him back to  
his prison."

Then glad voices were heard, and up from the  
banks of the river,  
Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came Michael  
the fiddler.

Long under Basil's roof had he lived like a god  
on Olympus,

Having no other care than dispensing music to mortals.

Far renowned was he for his silver locks and his fiddle.

“ Long live Michael,” they cried, “ our brave Acadian minstrel ! ”

As they bore him aloft in triumphal procession ; and straightway

Father Felician advanced with Evangeline, greeting the old man

Kindly and oft, and recalling the past, while Basil, enraptured,

Hailed with hilarious joy his old companions and gossips,

Laughing loud and long, and embracing mothers and daughters.

Much they marvelled to see the wealth of the ci-devant blacksmith,

All his domains and his herds, and his patriarchal demeanour ;

Much they marvelled to hear his tales of the soil  
and the climate,

And of the prairies, whose numberless herds were  
his who would take them ;

Each one thought in his heart, that he, too, would  
go and do likewise.

Thus they ascended the steps, and, crossing the  
airy veranda,

Entered the hall of the house, where already the  
supper of Basil

Waited his late return ; and they rested and  
feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden darkness  
descended.

All was silent without, and, illumining the landscape  
with silver,

Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad stars ;  
but within doors,

Brighter than these, shone the faces of friends in  
the glimmering lamplight.

Then from his station aloft, at the head of the  
table, the herdsman

Poured forth his heart and his wine together in  
endless profusion.

Lighting his pipe, that was filled with sweet  
Natchitoches tobacco,

Thus he spake to his guests, who listened, and  
smiled as they listened :—

“ Welcome once more, my friends, who so long  
have been friendless and homeless,

Welcome once more to a home, that is better  
perchance than the old one !

Here no hungry winter congeals our blood like  
the rivers ;

Here no stony ground provokes the wrath of the  
farmer.

Smoothly the ploughshare runs through the soil,  
as a keel through the water.

All the year round the orange-groves are in blossom ; and grass grows

More in a single night than a whole Canadian summer.

Here, too, numberless herds run wild and unclaimed in the prairies ;

Here, too, lands may be had for the asking, and forests of timber

With a few blows of the axe are hewn and framed into houses.

After your houses are built, and your fields are yellow with harvests,

No King George of England shall drive you away from your homesteads,

Burning your dwellings and barns, and stealing your farms and your cattle."

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful cloud from his nostrils,

And his huge, brawny hand came thundering down on the table,

So that the guests all started ; and Father Feli-  
cian, astounded,

Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff half-way  
to his nostrils.

But the brave Basil resumed, and his words were  
milder and gayer : —

“ Only beware of the fever, my friends, beware  
of the fever !

For it is not like that of our cold Acadian  
climate,

Cured by wearing a spider hung round one’s neck  
in a nutshell ! ”

Then there were voices heard at the door, and  
footsteps approaching

Sounded upon the stairs and the floor of the  
breezy veranda.

It was the neighbouring Creoles and small Aca-  
dian planters,

Who had been summoned all to the house of  
Basil the Herdsman.

Merry the meeting was of ancient comrades  
and neighbours :

Friend clasped friend in his arms ; and they who  
before were as strangers,

Meeting in exile, became straightway as friends  
to each other,

Drawn by the gentle bond of a common country  
together.

But in the neighbouring hall a strain of music,  
proceeding

From the accordant strings of Michael's melo-  
dious fiddle,

Broke up all further speech. Away, like chil-  
dren delighted,

All things forgotten beside, they gave themselves  
to the maddening

Whirl of the dizzy dance, as it swept and swayed  
to the music,

Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the rush of  
fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart, at the head of the hall, the  
priest and the herdsman  
Sat, conversing together of past and present and  
future ;  
While Evangeline stood like one entranced, for  
within her  
Olden memories rose, and loud in the midst of  
the music  
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an irrepress-  
ible sadness  
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole forth  
into the garden.  
Beautiful was the night. Behind the black wall  
of the forest,  
Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon.  
On the river  
Fell here and there through the branches a tremu-  
lous gleam of the moonlight,  
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a darkened  
and devious spirit.

Nearer and round about her, the manifold flowers  
of the garden  
Poured out their souls in odors, that were their  
prayers and confessions  
Unto the night, as it went its way, like a silent  
Carthusian.  
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as heavy with  
shadows and night-dews,  
Hung the heart of the maiden. The calm and  
the magical moonlight  
Seemed to inundate her soul with indefinable long-  
ings,  
As, through the garden gate, beneath the brown  
shade of the oak-trees,  
Passed she along the path to the edge of the  
measureless prairie.  
Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon it, and  
fire-flies  
Gleaming and floating away in mingled and in-  
finite numbers.

Over her head the stars, the thoughts of God in  
the heavens,  
Shone on the eyes of man, who had ceased to  
marvel and worship,  
Save when a blazing comet was seen on the walls  
of that temple,  
As if a hand had appeared and written upon them,  
“Upharsin.”  
And the soul of the maiden, between the stars  
and the fire-flies,  
Wandered alone, and she cried, — “O Gabriel !  
O my beloved !  
Art thou so near unto me, and yet I cannot  
behold thee ?  
Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy voice does  
not reach me ?  
Ah ! how often thy feet have trod this path to  
the prairie !  
Ah ! how often thine eyes have looked on the  
woodlands around me !

Ah ! how often beneath this oak, returning from  
labor,

Thou hast lain down to rest, and to dream of me  
in thy slumbers.

When shall these eyes behold, these arms be  
folded about thee ? ”

Loud and sudden and near the note of a whip-  
poorwill sounded

Like a flute in the woods ; and anon, through the  
neighbouring thickets,

Farther and farther away it floated and dropped  
into silence.

“ Patience ! ” whispered the oaks from orac-  
ular caverns of darkness ;

And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh respond-  
ed, “ To-morrow ! ”

Bright rose the sun next day ; and all the  
flowers of the garden

Bathed his shining feet with their tears, and  
anointed his tresses

With the delicious balm that they bore in their  
vases of crystal.

“ Farewell ! ” said the priest, as he stood at the  
shadowy threshold ;

“ See that you bring back the Prodigal Son from  
his fasting and famine,

And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept when the  
bridegroom was coming.”

“ Farewell ! ” answered the maiden, and, smiling,  
with Basil descended

Down to the river’s brink, where the boatmen  
already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morning, and  
sunshine, and gladness,

Swiftly they followed the flight of him who was  
speeding before them,

Blown by the blast of fate like a dead leaf over  
the desert.

Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the day that succeeded,  
Found they trace of his course, in lake or forest or river,  
Nor, after many days, had they found him ; but vague and uncertain  
Rumors alone were their guides through a wild and desolate country ;  
Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town of Adayes,  
Weary and worn, they alighted, and learned from the garrulous landlord,  
That on the day before, with horses and guides and companions,  
Gabriel left the village, and took the road of the prairies.

## IV.

Far in the West there lies a desert land,  
where the mountains  
Lift, through perpetual snows, their lofty and  
luminous summits.  
Down from their desolate, deep ravines, where  
the gorge, like a gateway,  
Opens a passage rude to the wheels of the emi-  
grant's wagon,  
Westward the Oregon flows and the Walleway  
and Owyhee.  
Eastward, with devious course, among the Wind-  
river Mountains,

Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps  
the Nebraska ;  
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the  
Spanish sierras,  
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the  
wind of the desert,  
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, de-  
scend to the ocean,  
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and  
solemn vibrations.  
Spreading between these streams are the won-  
drous, beautiful prairies,  
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and  
sunshine,  
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple  
amorphas.  
Over them wander the buffalo herds, and the elk  
and the roebuck ;  
Over them wander the wolves, and herds of rider-  
less horses ;

Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are  
weary with travel ;  
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ish-  
mael's children,  
Staining the desert with blood ; and above their  
terrible war-trails  
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the  
vulture,  
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaugh-  
tered in battle,  
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the  
heavens.  
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of  
these savage marauders ;  
Here and there rise groves from the margins of  
swift-running rivers ;  
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk  
of the desert,  
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots  
by the brook-side,

And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline  
heaven,  
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above  
them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base of the  
Ozark Mountains,  
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters and trap-  
pers behind him.  
Day after day, with their Indian guides, the  
maiden and Basil  
Followed his flying steps, and thought each day  
to o'ertake him.  
Sometimes they saw, or thought they saw, the  
smoke of his camp-fire  
Rise in the morning air from the distant plain;  
but at nightfall,  
When they had reached the place, they found  
only embers and ashes.

And, though their hearts were sad at times and  
their bodies were weary,  
Hope still guided them on, as the magic Fata  
Morgana  
Showed them her lakes of light, that retreated and  
vanished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire, there  
silently entered  
Into the little camp an Indian woman, whose  
features  
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience as  
great as her sorrow.  
She was a Shawnee woman returning home to  
her people,  
From the far-off hunting-grounds of the cruel  
Camanches,  
Where her Canadian husband, a Coureur-des-  
Bois, had been murdered.

Touched were their hearts at her story, and  
warmest and friendliest welcome  
Gave they, with words of cheer, and she sat and  
feasted among them  
On the buffalo-meat and the venison cooked on  
the embers.  
But when their meal was done, and Basil and all  
his companions,  
Worn with the long day's march and the chase  
of the deer and the bison,  
Stretched themselves on the ground, and slept  
where the quivering fire-light  
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and their forms  
wrapped up in their blankets,  
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent she sat  
and repeated  
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the charm of  
her Indian accent,  
All the tale of her love, with its pleasures, and  
pains, and reverses.

Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and to know  
that another  
Hapless heart like her own had loved and had  
been disappointed.  
Moved to the depths of her soul by pity and  
woman's compassion,  
Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who had  
suffered was near her,  
She in turn related her love and all its disas-  
ters.  
Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat, and when  
she had ended  
Still was mute ; but at length, as if a mysterious  
horror  
Passed through her brain, she spake, and re-  
peated the tale of the Mowis ;  
Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who won and  
wedded a maiden,  
But, when the morning came, arose and passed  
from the wigwam,

Fading and melting away and dissolving into the  
sunshine,  
Till she beheld him no more, though she followed  
far into the forest.  
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that seemed  
like a weird incantation,  
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau, who was  
wooed by a phantom,  
That, through the pines o'er her father's lodge,  
in the hush of the twilight,  
Breathed like the evening wind, and whispered  
love to the maiden,  
Till she followed his green and waving plume  
through the forest,  
And never more returned, nor was seen again by  
her people.  
Silent with wonder and strange surprise, Evan-  
geline listened  
To the soft flow of her magical words, till the  
region around her

Seemed like enchanted ground, and her swarthy  
guest the enchantress.

Slowly over the tops of the Ozark Mountains the  
moon rose,

Lighting the little tent, and with a mysterious  
splendor

Touching the sombre leaves, and embracing and  
filling the woodland.

With a delicious sound the brook rushed by, and  
the branches

Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely audible  
whispers.

Filled with the thoughts of love was Evangeline's  
heart, but a secret,

Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefinite  
terror,

As the cold, poisonous snake creeps into the nest  
of the swallow.

It was no earthly fear. A breath from the region  
of spirits

Seemed to float in the air of night ; and she felt  
for a moment  
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was pur-  
suing a phantom.  
And with this thought she slept, and the fear and  
the phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march was re-  
sumed ; and the Shawnee  
Said, as they journeyed along, — “ On the west-  
ern slope of these mountains  
Dwells in his little village the Black Robe chief  
of the Mission.  
Much he teaches the people, and tells them of  
Mary and Jesus ;  
Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and weep with  
pain, as they hear him.”  
Then, with a sudden and secret emotion, Evan-  
geline answered, —

“Let us go to the Mission, for there good tidings  
await us ! ”

Thither they turned their steeds ; and behind a  
spur of the mountains,

Just as the sun went down, they heard a murmur  
of voices,

And in a meadow green and broad, by the bank  
of a river,

Saw the tents of the Christians, the tents of the  
Jesuit Mission.

Under a towering oak, that stood in the midst of  
the village,

Knelt the Black Robe chief with his children.

A crucifix fastened

High on the trunk of the tree, and overshadowed  
by grape-vines,

Looked with its agonized face on the multitude  
kneeling beneath it.

This was their rural chapel. Aloft, through the  
intricate arches

Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of their vespers,  
Mingling its notes with the soft susurrus and sighs  
of the branches.  
Silent, with heads uncovered, the travellers, nearer approaching,  
Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined in the evening devotions.  
But when the service was done, and the benediction had fallen  
From the hands of the priest, like seed from the hands of the sower,  
Slowly the reverend man advanced to the strangers, and bade them  
Welcome ; and when they replied, he smiled with benignant expression,  
Hearing the homelike sounds of his mother-tongue in the forest,  
And with words of kindness conducted them into his wigwam.

There upon mats and skins they repos'd, and on  
cakes of the maize-ear

Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-  
gourd of the teacher.

Soon was their story told ; and the priest with  
solemnity answered :—

“ Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel,  
seated

On this mat by my side, where now the maiden  
reposes,

Told me this same sad tale ; then arose and con-  
tinued his journey ! ”

Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake  
with an accent of kindness ;

But on Evangeline's heart fell his words as in  
winter the snow-flakes

Fall into some lone nest from which the birds  
have departed.

“ Far to the north he has gone,” continued the  
priest ; “ but in autumn,

When the chase is done, will return again to the  
Mission.”

Then Evangeline said, and her voice was meek  
and submissive, —

“ Let me remain with thee, for my soul is sad  
and afflicted.”

So seemed it wise and well unto all ; and betimes  
on the morrow,

Mounting his Mexican steed, with his Indian  
guides and companions,

Homeward Basil returned, and Evangeline stayed  
at the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days succeeded  
each other, —

Days and weeks and months ; and the fields of  
maize that were springing

Green from the ground when a stranger she came,  
now waving above her,

Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves interlacing,  
and forming

Cloisters for mendicant crows and granaries pil-  
laged by squirrels.

Then in the golden weather the maize was husked,  
and the maidens

Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that betokened  
a lover,

But at the crooked laughed, and called it a thief  
in the corn-field.

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline brought  
not her lover.

“ Patience ! ” the priest would say ; “ have  
faith, and thy prayer will be answered !

Look at this delicate flower that lifts its head from  
the meadow,

See how its leaves all point to the north, as true  
as the magnet ;

It is the compass-flower, that the finger of God  
has suspended

Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the traveller's  
journey  
Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless waste of  
the desert.  
Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms  
of passion,  
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller  
of fragrance,  
But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their  
odor is deadly.  
Only this humble plant can guide us here, and  
hereafter  
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet  
with the dews of nepenthe."

So came the autumn, and passed, and the  
winter,—yet Gabriel came not;  
Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes of  
the robin and blue-bird

Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet  
Gabriel came not.

But on the breath of the summer winds a rumor  
was wafted

Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odor of  
blossom.

Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan  
forests,

Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw river.

And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes  
of St. Lawrence,

Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the  
Mission.

When over weary ways, by long and perilous  
marches,

She had attained at length the depths of the  
Michigan forests,

Found she the hunter's lodge deserted and fallen  
to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on, and in  
seasons and places  
Divers and distant far was seen the wandering  
maiden ;—  
Now in the tents of grace of the meek Moravian  
Missions,  
Now in the noisy camps and the battle-fields of  
the army,  
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and populous  
cities.  
Like a phantom she came, and passed away un-  
remembered.  
Fair was she and young, when in hope began the  
long journey ;  
Faded was she and old, when in disappointment  
it ended.  
Each succeeding year stole something away from  
her beauty,  
Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom  
and the shadow.

Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of  
gray o'er her forehead,  
Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly  
horizon,  
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the  
morning.



## V.

In that delightful land which is washed by the  
Delaware's waters,  
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of Penn the  
apostle,  
Stands on the banks of its beautiful stream the  
city he founded.  
There all the air is balm, and the peach is the  
emblem of beauty,  
And the streets still reecho the names of the  
trees of the forest,  
As if they fain would appease the Dryads whose  
haunts they molested.

There from the troubled sea had Evangeline  
landed, an exile,

Finding among the children of Penn a home and  
a country.

There old René Leblanc had died ; and when he  
departed,

Saw at his side only one of all his hundred  
descendants.

Something at least there was in the friendly  
streets of the city,

Something that spake to her heart, and made her  
no longer a stranger ;

And her ear was pleased with the Thee and  
Thou of the Quakers,

For it recalled the past, the old Acadian coun-  
try,

Where all men were equal, and all were brothers  
and sisters.

So, when the fruitless search, the disappointed  
endeavour,

Ended, to recommence no more upon earth, uncomplaining,

Thither, as leaves to the light, were turned her thoughts and her footsteps.

As from a mountain's top the rainy mists of the morning

Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape below us,

Sun-illumined, with shining rivers and cities and hamlets,

So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world far below her,

Dark no longer, but all illumined with love ; and the pathway

Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and fair in the distance.

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was his image,

Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last she beheld him,

Only more beautiful made by his deathlike silence and absence.

Into her thoughts of him time entered not, for it was not.

Over him years had no power ; he was not changed, but transfigured ;

He had become to her heart as one who is dead, and not absent ;

Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,

This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had taught her.

So was her love diffused, but, like to some odorous spices,

Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with aroma.

Other hope had she none, nor wish in life, but to follow

Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her Saviour.

Thus many years she lived as a Sister of Mercy;  
frequenting  
Lonely and wretched roofs in the crowded lanes  
of the city,  
Where distress and want concealed themselves  
from the sunlight,  
Where disease and sorrow in garrets languished  
neglected.

Night after night, when the world was asleep, as  
the watchman repeated  
Loud, through the gusty streets, that all was well  
in the city,  
High at some lonely window he saw the light of  
her taper.

Day after day, in the gray of the dawn, as slow  
through the suburbs  
Plodded the German farmer, with flowers and  
fruits for the market,

Met he that meek, pale face, returning home  
from its watchings.

Then it came to pass that a pestilence fell on  
the city,  
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly by  
flocks of wild pigeons,  
Darkening the sun in their flight, with naught in  
their crows but an acorn.  
And, as the tides of the sea arise in the month  
of September,  
Flooding some silver stream, till it spreads to a  
lake in the meadow,  
So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing its natural  
margin,  
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver stream of  
existence.  
Wealth had no power to bribe, nor beauty to  
charm, the oppressor ;  
But all perished alike beneath the scourge of his  
anger ;—  
Only, alas ! the poor, who had neither friends  
nor attendants,

Crept away to die in the almshouse, home of the  
homeless.

Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst of  
meadows and woodlands ; —

Now the city surrounds it ; but still, with its  
gateway and wicket

Meek, in the midst of splendor, its humble walls  
seem to echo

Softly the words of the Lord : — “ The poor ye  
always have with you.”

Thither, by night and by day, came the Sister  
of Mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought, indeed, to  
behold there

Gleams of celestial light encircle her forehead  
with splendor,

Such as the artist paints o'er the brows of saints  
and apostles,

Or such as hangs by night o'er a city seen at a  
distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of the city  
celestial,  
Into whose shining gates ere long their spirits  
would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through the streets,  
deserted and silent,  
Wending her quiet way, she entered the door of  
the almshouse.  
Sweet on the summer air was the odor of flowers  
in the garden ;  
And she paused on her way to gather the fairest  
among them,  
That the dying once more might rejoice in their  
fragrance and beauty.  
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the corridors,  
cooled by the east wind,  
Distant and soft on her ear fell the chimes from  
the belfry of Christ Church,

And, intermingled with these, across the meadows  
were wafted  
Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the Swedes  
in their church at Wicaco.  
Soft as descending wings fell the calm of the  
hour on her spirit ;  
Something within her said, — “ At length thy  
trials are ended ” ;  
And, with light in her looks, she entered the  
chambers of sickness.  
Noiselessly moved about the assiduous, careful  
attendants,  
Moistening the feverish lip, and the aching brow,  
and in silence  
Closing the sightless eyes of the dead, and con-  
cealing their faces,  
Where on their pallets they lay, like drifts of  
snow by the road-side.  
Many a languid head, upraised as Evangeline  
entered,

Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze while she  
passed, for her presence

Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun on the  
walls of a prison.

And, as she looked around, she saw how Death,  
the consoler,

Laying his hand upon many a heart, had healed  
it for ever.

Many familiar forms had disappeared in the night-  
time ;

Vacant their places were, or filled already by  
strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a feeling  
of wonder,

Still she stood, with her colorless lips apart,  
while a shudder

Ran through her frame, and, forgotten, the flow-  
erets dropped from her fingers,

And from her eyes and cheeks the light and  
bloom of the morning.

Then there escaped from her lips a cry of such  
terrible anguish,

That the dying heard it, and started up from their  
pillows.

On the pallet before her was stretched the form  
of an old man.

Long, and thin, and gray were the locks that  
shaded his temples ;

But, as he lay in the morning light, his face for  
a moment

Seemed to assume once more the forms of its  
earlier manhood ;

So are wont to be changed the faces of those  
who are dying.

Hot and red on his lips still burned the flush of  
the fever,

As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood had  
besprinkled its portals,

---



That the Angel of Death might see the sign,  
and pass over.

Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and his spirit  
exhausted

Seemed to be sinking down through infinite  
depths in the darkness,

Darkness of slumber and death, for ever sinking  
and sinking.

Then through those realms of shade, in multiplied  
reverberations,

Heard he that cry of pain, and through the hush  
that succeeded

Whispered a gentle voice, in accents tender and  
saint-like,

“ Gabriel ! O my beloved ! ” and died away  
into silence.

Then he beheld, in a dream, once more the  
home of his childhood ;

Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan rivers  
among them,

Village, and mountain, and woodlands ; and,  
walking under their shadow,

As in the days of her youth, Evangeline rose in  
his vision.

Tears came into his eyes ; and as slowly he  
lifted his eyelids,

Vanished the vision away, but Evangeline knelt  
by his bedside.

Vainly he strove to whisper her name, for the  
accents unuttered

Died on his lips, and their motion revealed what  
his tongue would have spoken.

Vainly he strove to rise ; and Evangeline, kneel-  
ing beside him,

Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head on her  
bosom.

Sweet was the light of his eyes ; but it suddenly  
sank into darkness,

As when a lamp is blown out by a gust of wind  
at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear,  
and the sorrow,  
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied  
longing,  
All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of  
patience !  
And, as she pressed once more the lifeless head  
to her bosom,  
Meekly she bowed her own, and murmured,  
“ Father, I thank thee ! ”

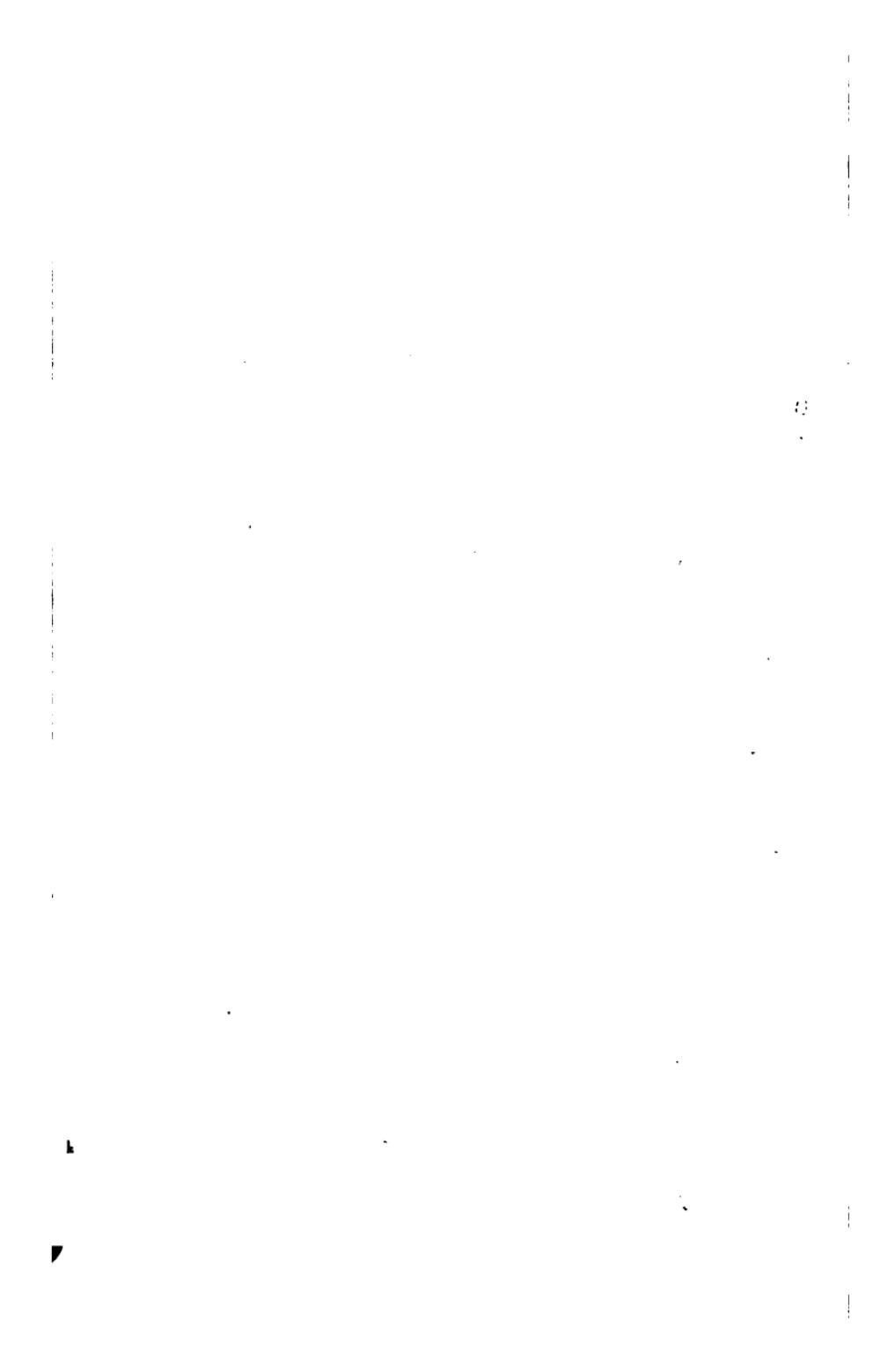
STILL stands the forest primeval ; but far away  
from its shadow,  
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers  
are sleeping.  
Under the humble walls of the little Catholic  
church-yard,  
In the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and  
unnoticed.  
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing  
beside them,  
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are  
at rest and for ever,

Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no  
longer are busy,  
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have  
ceased from their labors,  
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have com-  
pleted their journey !

Still stands the forest primeval ; but under the  
shade of its branches  
Dwells another race, with other customs and  
language.  
Only along the shore of the mournful and misty  
Atlantic  
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose fathers  
from exile  
Wandered back to their native land to die in its  
bosom.  
In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the loom are  
still busy ;

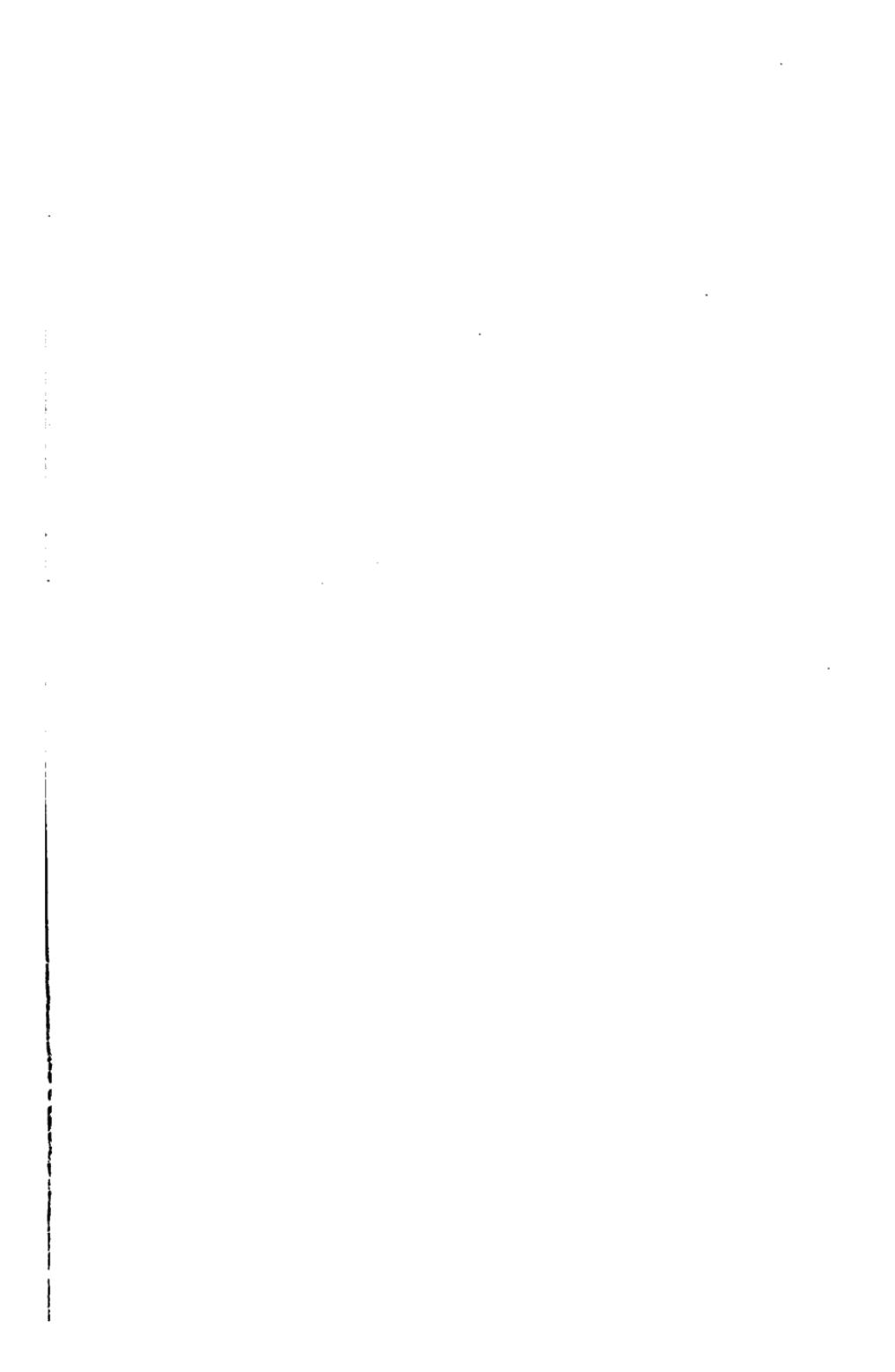
Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their  
kirtles of homespun,  
And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline's  
story,  
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced,  
neighbouring ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the  
wail of the forest.

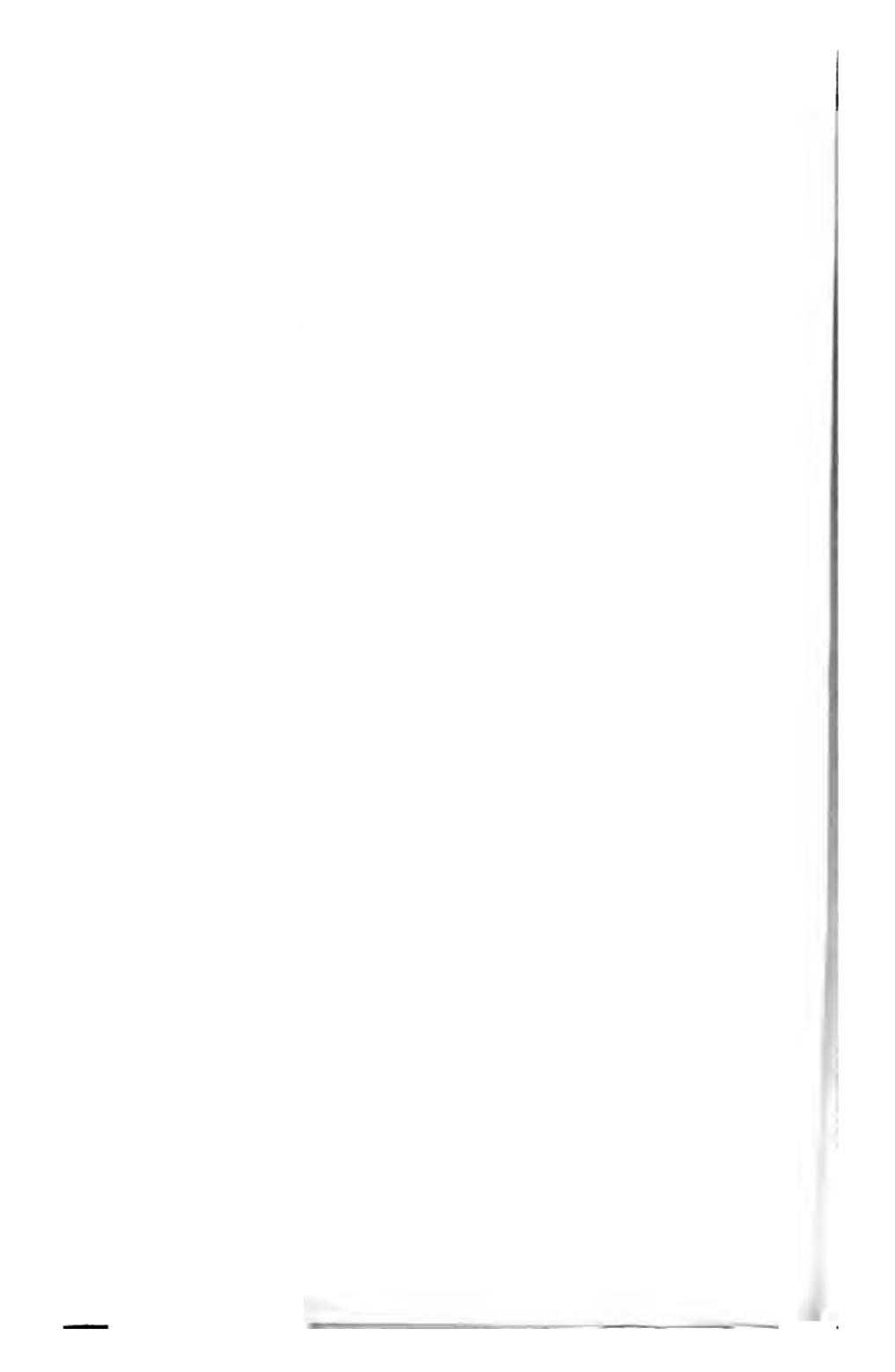
THE END.











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